The TATLER.

By Mrs. Jenny Diſtaff, *Half Siſter to Mr.* Bickerſtaff.

Quicquid agunt Homines noſtri Farrago Libelli.

From *Thurſday June* 23. to *Saturday June* 25. 1709.

From our own Apartment, June 23.

MY Brother has made an Excurſion into the Country, and the Work againſt *Saturday* lies upon me. I am very glad I have got Pen and Ink in my Hand; for I have for ſome time long'd for his Abſence, to give a right Idea of Things which, I thought, he put in a very odd Light, and ſome of them to the Diſadvantage of my own Sex. It is much to be lamented, that it is neceſſary to make Diſcourſes, and publiſh Treatiſes, to keep the horrid Creatures, the Men, within the Rules of common Decency. Turning over the Papers of Memorials or Hints for the enſuing Diſcourſes, I find a Letter ſubſcrib'd by Mr. *Truman.*

SIR,

'I AM lately come to Town, and have read you with much Pleaſure. You make Wit ſubſervient to good Principles and good Manners. Yet, becauſe I deſign to buy the *Tatlers* for my Daughters to read, I take the Freedom to deſire you, for the future, to ſay nothing about any Combat between *Alexander* and *Thaleſtris.*

This Offence gives me Occaſion to expreſs my ſelf with the Reſentment I ought, on People who take Liberties of Speech before that Sex of whom the honour'd Names of Mother, Daughter, and Siſter, are a Part: I had like to have nam'd Wife in the Number; but the ſenſeleſs World are ſo miſtaken in their Sentiments of Pleaſure, that the moſt amiable Term in Humane Life is become the Deriſion of Fools and Scorners. My Brother and I have at leaſt Fifty Times quarrel'd upon this Topick. I ever argue, That the Frailties of Women are to be imputed to the falſe Ornaments which Men of Wit put upon our Folly and Coquetry. He lays all the Vice of Men upon Women's ſecret Approbation of Libertine Characters in them. I did not care to give up a Point; but now he is out of the Way, I cannot but own I believe there is very much in what he aſſerted: For if you will believe your Eyes, and own, that the wickedeſt and the wittieſt of 'em all marry one Day or other, Is it poſſible to believe, that if a Man thought he ſhould be for ever incapable of being receiv'd by a Woman of Merit and Honour, he would perſiſt in an abandon'd Way, and deny himſelf the Poſſibility of enjoying the Happineſs of well-govern'd Deſires, orderly Satisfactions, and honourable Methods of Life? If our Sex were wiſe, a Lover ſhould have a Certificate from the laſt Woman he ſerv'd how he was turn'd away, before he was receiv'd into the Service of another: But at preſent any Vagabond is welcome, provided he promiſes to enter into our Livery. It is wonderful, that we will not take a Footman without Credentials from his laſt Maſter; and in the greateſt Concern of Life, we make no Scruple of falling into a Treaty with the moſt notorious Offender in his Behaviour againſt others. But this Breach of Commerce between the Sexes proceeds from an unaccountable Prevalence of Cuſtom, by which a Woman is to the laſt Degree reproachable for being deceiv'd, and a Man ſuffers no Loſs of Credit for being a Deceiver. Since this Tyrant Humour has gain'd Place, Why are we repreſented in the Writings of Men in ill Figures for Artifice in our Carriage, when we have to do with a profeſs'd Impoſtor? When Oaths, Imprecations, Vows, and Adorations, are made uſe of as Words of Courſe, What Arts are not neceſſary to defend us from ſuch as glory in the Breach of 'em? As for my Part, I am reſolv'd to hear all, and believe none of 'em; and therefore ſolemnly declare, no Vow ſhall deceive me but that of Marriage: For I am turn'd of Twenty, and being of a ſmall Fortune, ſome Wit, and (if I can believe my Lovers and my Glaſs) Handſome, I have heard all that can be ſaid towards my Undoing, and ſhall therefore, for Warning-ſake, give an Account of the Offers that have been made me, my Manner of rejecting 'em, and my Aſſiſtances to keep my Reſolution. In the Sixteenth Year of my Life, I fell into the Acquaintance of a Lady, extremely well known in this Town for the quick Advancement of her Husband, and the Honours and Diſtinctions which her Induſtry has procur'd him, and all who belong to her. This excellent Body ſat next to me for ſome Months at Church, and took the Liberty, which ſhe ſaid her Years and the Zeal ſhe had for my Welfare gave her Claim to, to aſſure me, that ſhe obſerv'd ſome Parts of my Behaviour which would lead me into Errors, and give Encouragement to ſome to entertain Hopes I did not think of. What made you (ſaid ſhe) look through your Fan at that Lord, when your Eyes ſhould have been turn'd upward, or cloſ'd in Attention upon better Objects? I bluſh'd, and pretended Fifty odd Excuſes; — but confounded my ſelf the more. She wanted nothing but to ſee that Confuſion, and goes on: Nay, Child, do not be troubled that I take Notice of it, my Value for you made me ſpeak it; for tho' he is my Kinſman, I have a nearer Regard to Virtue than any other Conſideration. She had hardly done ſpeaking, when this noble Lord came up to us, and took her Hand to lead her to her Coach. My Head ran all that Day and Night on the exemplary Carriage of this Woman, who could be ſo virtuouſly impertinent, as to admoniſh one ſhe was hardly acquainted with. However ſo ſtruck upon the Vanity of a Girl that it may poſſibly be, his Thoughts might have been as favourable of me, as mine are amorous of him, and as unlikely Things as that have happen'd, if he ſhould make me his Wife. She never mention'd this more to me; but I ſtill in all publick Places ſtole Looks at this Man, who eaſily obſerv'd my Paſſion for him. It is ſo hard a Thing to check the Return of agreeable Thoughts, that he became my Dream, my Viſion, my Food, my Wiſh, my Torment. That Miniſter of Darkneſs, the Lady *Sempronia*, perceiv'd too well the Temper I was in, and would one Day after Evening Service needs take me to the Park. When we

we were there, my Lord passes by; I flush'd into a Flame. Mrs. *Distaff* (said she) You may very well remember the Concern I was in upon the first Notice I took of your Regard to that Lord, and forgive me, that had a tender Friendship for your Mother (who is now in her Grave) that I am vigilant of your Conduct. She went on with much Severity, and after great Sollicitation prevail'd on me to go with her into the Country, and there spend the ensuing Summer out of the Way of a Man she saw I lov'd, and one whom she perceiv'd meditated my Ruin, by frequently desiring her to introduce him to me; which she absolutely refus'd, except he would give his Honour that he had no other Design but to marry me. To her Country-House a Week or Two after we went: There was at the further End of her Garden a Kind of Wilderness, in the Middle of which ran a soft Rivulet by an Arbor of Jessamin. In this Place I usually pass'd my retir'd Hours, and read some Romantick or Poetical Tale till the Close of the Evening. It was near that Time in the Heat of Summer, when gentle Winds, soft Murmurs of Water, and Notes of Nightingals had giv'n my Mind an Indolence, which added to that Repose of Soul, which Twilight and the End of a Warm Day naturally throws upon the Spirits. It was at such an Hour, and in such a State of Tranquility I sat, when, to my unexpressible Amazement, I saw my Lord walking towards me, whom I knew not till that Moment to have been in the Country. I could remark in his Approach the Perplexity which attends a Man big with Design; and I had, while he was coming forward, Time to reflect that I was betray'd; the Sense of which gave me a Resentment suitable to such a Baseness: But when he enter'd into the Bower where I was, my Heart flew towards him, and I confess a certain Joy came into my Mind, with an Hope that he might then make a Declaration of Honour and Passion. This threw my Eye upon him with such Tenderness, as gave him Power, with a broken Accent, to begin. Madam, -- You will wonder --- For it is certain, you must have observ'd --- tho' I fear you will misinterpret the Motives --- But by Heav'n, and all that's Sacred! If you could -- Here he made a full Stand -- and I recover'd Power to say-- The Consternation I am in you will not, I hope, believe-- An helpless innocent Maid --- Besides that, the Place --- He saw me in as great Confusion as himself; which attributing to the same Causes, he had the Audaciousness to throw himself at my Feet, and talk of the Stilness of the Evening; then ran into Deifications of my Person. Pure Flames, Constant Love, Eternal Raptures, and a Thousand other Phrases drawn from the Images we have of Heaven, which ill Men use for the Service of Hell, were run over with uncommon Vehemence. After which he seiz'd me in his Arms: His Design was too evident. In my utmost Distress, I fell upon my Knees --- My Lord, pity me, on my Knees --- On my Knees in the Cause of Virtue, as you were lately in that of Wickedness. Can you think of destroying the Labour of a whole Life, the Purpose of a long Education, for the base Service of a sudden Appetite, to throw one that loves you, that doats on you, out of the Company and Road of all that is virtuous and Praise-worthy? Have I taken in all the Instructions of Piety, Religion, and Reason, for no other End but to be the Sacrifice of Lust, and abandon'd to Scorn? Assume your self, my Lord, and do not attempt to vitiate a Temple sacred to Innocence, Honour, and Religion. If I have injur'd you, stab this Bosom, and let me die, but not be ruin'd by the Hand I Love. The Ardency of my Passion made me incapable of uttering more; and I saw my Lover astonish'd, and reform'd by my Behaviour: When rush'd in *Semphronia*. Ha! Faithless base Man, could you then steal out of Town, and lurk like a Robber about my House for such brutish Purposes. My Lord was by this Time recover'd, and fell into a violent Laughter at the Turn which *Sempronia* design'd to give her Villany. He bow'd to me with the utmost Respect: Mrs. *Distaff*, said he, be careful hereafter of your Company; and so retir'd. The Fiend *Sempronia* congratulated my Deliverance with a Flood of Tears. This Nobleman has since very frequently made his Addresses to me with Honour, but I have as often refus'd 'em; as well knowing, that Familiarity and Marriage will make him, on some ill-natur'd Occasion, call all I said in the Arbour a Theatrical Action. Besides that, I glory in contemning a Man who had Thoughts to my Dishonour. And if this Method were the Imitation of the whole Sex, Innocence would be the only Dress of Beauty; and all Affectation by any other Arts to please the Eyes of Men, would be banish'd to the Stews for ever. The Conquest of Passion gives Ten times more Happiness than we can reap from the Gratification of it; and she that has got over such a one as mine, will stand among Beaux and Pretty Fellows, with as much Safety as in a Summer's Day among Grashoppers and Butterflies.

P. S. *I have Ten Millions of Things more against Men, if I ever get the Pen again.*

St. James's Coffee-house, June 24.

Our last Advices from the *Hague*, dated the 28th Instant, say, That on the 25th a Squadron of *Dutch* Men of War sail'd out of the *Texel* to join Admiral *Baker* at *Spithead*. The 26th was observ'd as a Day of Fasting and Humiliation, to implore a Blessing on the Arms of the Allies this ensuing Campagne. Letters from *Dresden* are very particular in the Account of the Gallantry and Magnificence in which that Court has appear'd since the Arrival of the King of *Denmark*. No Day has pass'd in which publick Shews have not been exhibited for his Entertainment and Diversion: The last of that Kind which is mention'd is a Carousal, wherein many of the Youth of the first Quality, dress'd in the most splendid Manner, ran for the Prize. His *Danish* Majesty condescended to the same; but having observ'd that there was a Design laid to throw it in his Way, pass'd by without attempting to gain it. The Court of *Dresden* was preparing to accompany his *Danish* Majesty to *Potsdam*, where the Expectation of an Interview of three Kings had drawn together such Multitudes of People, that many Persons of Distinction will be oblig'd to lie in Tents as long as those Courts continue in that Place.

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